

Business Certificates

MGL: 110 § 5, 6

General Information: The primary purpose of filing a business certificate is to protect consumers or creditors by identifying the names and addresses of the owners of the business. The filing of a business certificate does not protect a business name as does a corporate filing or a trademark registration. A business certificate filing is commonly called a “d/b/a” (doing business as).

Any person conducting a business, individually or as a partnership, in the commonwealth under any title or name other than his real name, must file a business certificate with the Town Clerk of each city or town in which the business has an office. If a corporation is operating a business in a name, other than the incorporated name, they too need to file.

The certificate must include the full name and residence of each person conducting the business; the place, including street and number, where the business is conducted; and the title under which the business conducted. Each person conducting the business, certifying the statements contained in the certificate are true must sign the certificate under oath. The certificate can be signed in the presence of the Clerk, or staff of the office, a notary public or a justice of the peace.

Other pertinent facts:

Business certificates are valid for 4 (four) years and must be renewed as long as the business remains active. If the business certificate is not renewed, the business shall be considered defunct.

The cost of a business certificate is \$25.00. If you desire to change your business name or discontinue or amend your business certificate, we will process that amendment. (\$5.00 fee)

Frequently asked questions:

I am running a business out of my home. Do I still need a business certificate?

Yes. All business, home or otherwise, must be registered according to MGL: 110 § 5, 6.

In addition, before a business certificate is issued to you, your business will have to be reviewed by the Building Department and a Notice of Intent will need to be filed. (\$15.00 fee)

How do I file a business certificate?

You can come into the Clerk’s office and file in person. At that time, you will sign the affidavit and complete the pertinent information on the in-take form. We will make a certified copy for you (\$10.00 fee) if you wish for your records. You can mail a previously completed application to us as long as it has been notarized. The \$25.00 fee must be paid at the time of filing.

Do I need to display a copy of my business certificate in my place of business?

No, but you must have one available for inspection should it be requested?